



# HAWAII EDUCATIONAL POLICY CENTER

## EDUCATING THE WHOLE CHILD: THE CASE FOR ARTS EDUCATION

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The National Center for Educational Statistics reports on art education policies among all the states. [https://nces.ed.gov/programs/statereform/tabc\\_18.asp](https://nces.ed.gov/programs/statereform/tabc_18.asp)

In this 2015 data, we learn that:

- 45 states require arts instruction at the elementary level...but not Hawai'i
- 45 states require arts instruction at the middle school level... but not Hawai'i
- 44 states require arts instruction at the high school level... but not Hawai'i
- 26 states require course credits in the arts for graduation... but not Hawai'i.

In a major legislative proposal covering a wide range of reforms, the Hawai'i State Teachers Association has included a requirement for whole school education – which it defines as: "Whole child education" means instruction in visual arts, music, theater, dance, Hawaiian and Polynesian studies, Hawaiian language, native Hawaiian culture, native Hawaiian traditional and customary practices, and physical education."

Our State Department of Education has reported a dramatic increase in the number and percentage of students in recent years who have "disadvantages," meaning they are English Learners, Special Education students, and coming from families that qualify them for free or reduced lunch. It is significant that much of the research suggests that arts education has positive impacts on school success for disadvantaged children. Currently, there appears to be no overt strategy by either the State Board of Education or the Hawai'i Department of Education to increase arts education in Hawai'i public schools.

From Sections of the proposed bill, which can be found at  
<http://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/session2016/bills/HB2733 .HTM>

SECTION 1. Whole child education promotes creative thinking and improves academic achievement across subject areas. According to a 2014 study performed by Lois Hetland and Ellen Winner of the Harvard Graduate School of Education, education in music and drama shows a generalizable causal relationship to increases in verbal achievement and spatial reasoning. Similarly, researchers in the Department of Education Reform at the University of Arkansas found in 2013 that instruction in visual arts led to gains in critical thinking skills.

In addition, place-based curricula immerses students in the culture, history, and heritage of their local communities, engaging students in applying cultural content to local community experiences. Given the unique history of Hawaii as a former sovereign nation and problems faced by communities dealing with the legacy of annexation, including higher risks of poverty

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and lower levels of academic achievement for native Hawaiians, place-based education is crucial to giving students the skills necessary to solve community problems.

The purpose of this part is promote creative thinking, self-directed learning, and cultural understanding by requiring students in all grade levels to receive whole child education.

SECTION 2. Chapter 302A, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated and to read as follows:

**"§302A- Whole child education.** (a) Notwithstanding any other law to the contrary, beginning with the 2017-2018 school year, all public schools shall provide education in whole child education, as follows:

(1) Beginning with the 2017-2018 school year, for all public elementary schools, twenty per cent of student hours shall be allocated to whole child education; and

(2) Beginning with the 2017-2018 school year, for all public middle and intermediate schools, ten per cent of student hours shall be allocated to whole child education.

(b) As used in this section:

"Student hours" has the same meaning as in section 302A-251.

"Whole child education" means instruction in visual arts, music, theater, dance, Hawaiian and Polynesian studies, Hawaiian language, native Hawaiian culture, native Hawaiian traditional and customary practices, and physical education."

## Findings

HEPC looked for research to back up the claims of the bill. For the most part, HEPC found strong correlations and some evidence of causation between arts education and other areas of school success. Studies provided good data, some of it longitudinal, some of it analytical and logical.

For Example:

### Preparing Students for the Next America: The Benefits of an Arts Education

<http://www.aep-arts.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Preparing-Students-for-the-Next-America-FINAL.pdf> April 2013 Arts Education Partnership

"Arts education prepares students to engage meaningfully in their communities.

Arts education:

**1 Strengthens perseverance.**

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Arts education develops students' capacity to persist in the face of a challenge. Through arts study, students improve in their ability to turn barriers into opportunities, overcome difficulty in completing complex tasks, and sustain attention.

In a longitudinal study of 25,000 secondary school students, those with higher involvement in the arts scored better on measures of persistence than their peers with lower arts involvement.

## **2 Facilitates cross-cultural understanding.**

Arts experiences foster pro-social behaviors and social tolerance that help prepare students for life in an increasingly global and culturally diverse world. Ensemble performance, community mural painting, and other group arts experiences in which participants are from diverse backgrounds demonstrate particular value for developing cross-cultural understanding.

## **3 Builds community and supports civic engagement.**

Arts programs foster a sense of community among participants that supports their personal, artistic, civic, and social development. They also offer a vehicle for effecting change in the surrounding community.

Students who have had an arts-rich education volunteer more often and exhibit greater civic engagement than other students.

## **4 Fosters a creative community.**

Students who study the arts in their school years are more likely to engage with the arts in later life as consumers, performers, or creators than their peers who receive no arts education. Additionally, researchers find that the more art forms students study, the greater their arts participation in adulthood."

### **Arts and Achievement in At-Risk Youth: Findings from Four Longitudinal Studies**

<https://www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/Arts-At-Risk-Youth.pdf>

(Source: National Endowment for the Arts – 2012)

#### **"Academic Achievement**

Teenagers and young adults of low socioeconomic status (SES) who have a history of in-depth arts involvement show better academic outcomes than do low-SES youth who have less arts involvement. They earn better grades and demonstrate higher rates of college enrollment and attainment.

Among low-SES students:

1. Eighth graders who had high levels of arts engagement from kindergarten through elementary school showed higher test scores in science and writing than did students who had lower levels of arts engagement over the same period.
2. Students who had arts-rich experiences in high school were more likely than students without those experiences to complete a calculus course. Also, students who took arts courses in high school achieved a slightly higher grade-point average (GPA) in math than did other students
3. In two separate databases, students who had arts-rich experiences in high school showed higher overall GPAs than did students who lacked those experiences.
  - Better GPAs were also observed among high-SES students who had earned arts credits in high school: 3.17, on average, compared with 2.97 for the high-SES students who had earned few or no arts credits, and 2.84 for the full sample.
4. High school students who earned few or no arts credits were five times more likely not to have graduated than students who earned many arts credits.
5. Both 8th-grade and high school students who had high levels of arts engagement were more likely to aspire to college than were students with less arts engagement.
6. Arts-engaged high school students enrolled in competitive colleges — and in four-year colleges in general — at higher rates than did low-arts-engaged students.
  - Even among high-SES individuals, college-going rates were higher if students had engaged in arts-rich experiences in high school, according to a separate database. Ninety-four percent of the high-arts group went on to a four-year college, versus 76 percent of the low-arts, high-SES group.
7. Students who had intensive arts experiences in high school were three times more likely than students who lacked those experiences to earn a bachelor's degree. They also were more likely to earn "mostly A's" in college.
  - Even among students of high socioeconomic status, those with a history of arts involvement earned "mostly A's" at a higher rate than did students without an arts-rich background (55 percent versus 37 percent.)"

## **Additional Sources**

**Financial Support for Arts Education (2015 National Assembly of State Arts Agencies)**

<http://www.nasaa-arts.org/Research/Grant-Making/ArtsEdGrantMakingFactSheet0215.pdf>

**The Impact of Arts Education (2011) – Ellen Winner**

<http://www.oecd.org/edu/ceri/48078259.pdf>

**The Impact of Arts Education on Skills for Innovation (2013 Stéphan Vincent-Lancrin)**

<http://www.vlor.be/sites/www.vlor.be/files/brussels - arts education - december 2013.pdf>

**Ten Salient Studies on the Arts in Education**

<http://www.onlinecolleges.net/10-salient-studies-on-the-arts-in-education/>

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